

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 DOTE-00 FAA-00 CAB-09 COME-00 OMB-01

DRC-01 /112 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3262

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T SUVA 767

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PFOR, EGEN FJ

SUBJ: QUARTERLY ASSESSMENT: FIJI

REF: SUVA 501

FOR ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY HUMMEL

1. POLITICAL TRENDS: RACIAL ANTAGONISM IN PARLIAMENT FLARED UP AGAIN IN LATE JUNE OVER LAND AVAILABILITY, CHRONIC IRRITANT TO RACIAL HARMONY. OPPOSITION CRITICISM OF GOF AGRICULTURAL POLICIES LED TO CRITICISM OF LAND POLICIES WITH RESULT THAT MINFOR FIJIAN AFFAIRS TOLD HOUSE NO RPT NO MORE NATIVE LANDERS WHICH COMPRISES OVER EIGHTY PERCENT OF ALL LANDERS WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR LEASE TO INDIANS. PM AWAY AT TIMES: HAD HE BEEN HERE HE MAY HAVE BEEN ABLE NIP PROBLEM IN BUD. ACTING PM MOVED CAUTIOUSLY IN ATTEMPTING SMOOTH THINGS OVER WITH RESULT THAT ISSUE BECAME HOTTER. WHEN PM RETURNED OPPOSITION LOST NO TIME IN DEMANDING EXPLANATION OF GOVT LAND POLICIES. PM OPTED TO IGNORE DEMAND AND AFTER TEMPERS COOLED GOF QUITELY RETURNED TO FORMER LEASEING POLICIES. ISSUE MAY FLARE UP AGAIN WHEN HOUSE RESUMES LATER IN AUGUST HOWEVER.

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2. CIVAIR: NEGOTIATION OF AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT, IN
MILL FOR OVER YEAR, ONLY REAL PROBLEM IN US-FIJI RELATIONS.
GOF WANTS FIJI CARRIER RIGHTS TO AMERICAN SAMOA AND MAJURO
IN RETURN FOR LONG HEL US CARRIER RIGHTS THROUGH FIJI.
ALTHOUGH AGREEMENT STILL PENDING, US CAB IS CONSIDERING AP-
PLICATION FOR TEMPORARY RIGHTS TO FIJI CARRIER TO BOTH US
POINTS. BECAUSE OF WHAT GOF CONSIDERS UNNECESSARY DELAYS
ON PART OF US IN PROCESSING APPLICATION, HOWEVER, PANAM
SERVICE HAS BEEN RESPECTIVELY CUT FROM THREE PER WEEK IN
MAY TO NON BY END OF JULY. ALTHOUGH GOF HAS PERMITTED ONE
SERVICE EACH DURING FIRST AND SECOND WEEKS OF AUGUST AS
GESTURE OF GOODWILL IN VIEW US ASSURANCES CASE
BEING EXPEDITED. FIJI IS HOLDING TO POSITION
THAT IS REQUEST NOT RPT NOT EXCESSIVE IN VIEW OF BENEFITS
LONG ACCRUING TO US CARRIER, AND HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO
GIVE RECIPROCAL RIGHTS ONLY AFTER IT KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT US
PREPARED GIVE.

3. ECONOMIC TRENDS: IN WAKE OF RISING COSTS OF VITAL OVERSEAS
PRODUCTS AND SHIPPING, GOF FACES THREAT OF SERIOUS RECESSION.
UNEMPLOYMENT RISING WHILE TOURISM AND OTHER MAJOR GROWTH
SECTORS SLOWING SIGNIFICANTLY. ONAIGISTONSSOF IMPOSED SIGN-
IFICANT MONETARY RESTRICTIONS IN ATTEMPT STEM OUTFLOW CAPITAL
AND IMPROVE SAGGING FOREIGN EXCHANGE POSITION. PROBLEMS
EXACERBATED BY LABOR UNREST AND STRIKES FOR HIGHER WAGES.
US POSITION AS TRADING PARTNER CONTINUES TO IMPROVE.

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